



# **Improving Student Success Rates in Internet Courses**

A Quality Enhancement Plan

Submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges

by

Pitt Community College

Dr. Lawrence L. Rouse, PCC President

SACS On-site Review: September 26-28, 2022

**Message from President Lawrence Rouse**

A central part of Pitt Community College’s preparation for reaffirmation was the selection and development of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – a five-year plan for an initiative that will enhance student success. The topic, to improve student success in Internet courses, will begin in earnest this year. The fall semester will be largely spent planning and staffing the initiative. During the spring semester PCC will pilot a small cohort of courses with specific course outcomes.

The QEP topic reflects Pitt Community College’s mission and core values. It is consistent with our vision of PCCs future, as laid out in our five-year strategic plan and informed by our institutional assessment processes. Most importantly, the QEP is more than a SACSCOC requirement, because enhancing the quality of student success is at the heart of what we do at Pitt Community College. Student success through quality instruction is what our faculty specializes in. An effective QEP capitalizes on that strength.

We acknowledge and thank the many students and employees who contributed to the Quality Enhancement Plan. Its five-year timeline is designed to increase student success rates in Internet courses.

**Table of Contents**

**Institutional Summary.....3**

**Topic Identification (7.2.a) .....4**

**Broad-Based Support (7.2.b) .....6**

**QEP Focus on Internet Course Student Success (7.2.c) .....7**

**Institutional Commitment to the Topic (7.2.d) .....11**

    Best Practices from the Literature ..... 11

    Allocation of Resources..... 12

    QEP Marketing Plan ..... 14

**Plan to Assess Achievement (7.2.e) .....16**

**QEP Development Timeline .....19**

**References.....22**

**Appendices.....25**

    Appendix A. PCC Mission, Strategic Plan, and Goals ..... 25

    Appendix B. List of Individuals ..... 27

    Appendix C. Employee Survey and Results ..... 28

    Appendix E. Literature Review ..... 38

    Appendix F. Moodle Home Page Training for Student Preparation ..... 50

    Appendix G. QEP Research ..... 52

**Institutional Summary**

Pitt Community College is located in Winterville, NC and awards associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates for more than 80 programs and provides adult basic education, literacy training, and occupational extension courses. The College serves more than 16,000 credit and non-credit students annually and is the sixth-largest in the 58-member N.C. Community College System.

The College mission is to educate and empower people for success. In support of the college's mission, the institution strives to provide high quality general education, liberal arts and sciences, career and technical education, continuing education, and developmental education. As an open access institution the College has become well recognized for its excellent health science programs; business, industrial, construction, public safety programs; college transfer programs; and collaborative programs with local public schools. A combined total of over 16,000 students were served by the College in 2020-2021. The College ranks seventh according to enrollment among the NC Community College System.

The College is located on approximately 300 acres of land on the coastal plain of eastern North Carolina. Per 2021 figures the college employed 489 full time faculty and staff (225 / 264). Approximately 56% of the credit students reside in Pitt County, NC. Another 24% of the students are from other NC counties, mostly in eastern North Carolina. The remaining 20% are from other NC counties or out of state. Approximately 60% of the credit students are female and 40% male. Approximately 47% of the credit students are white and 53% are non-white. In the 2020-2021 academic year the college had 1,628 curriculum graduates.

The College is one of the 58 community colleges in the NC Community College System and is a public institution with an open door admissions policy. The operating budget for 2021-2022 totaled approximately \$107,185,264 from state, county, federal, and institutional sources.

**Topic Identification (7.2.a)**

In 2019, Pitt Community College began to develop a new strategic plan. The work was led by Planning and Research staff and members from the Achieving the Dream Steering Committee. In October of 2019 the college hosted over 300 employees and students in workshops with the purpose of developing ideas for strategic plan priorities, goals, and objectives. College employees could attend one of two scheduled workshops. These groups examined and refined the institution's mission and vision statement and developed a new set of core values, as well as institutional priorities, goals, and objectives. The number one priority identified during the strategic plan development was *student success*. The plan was developed with quality enhancement plan requirements in mind.

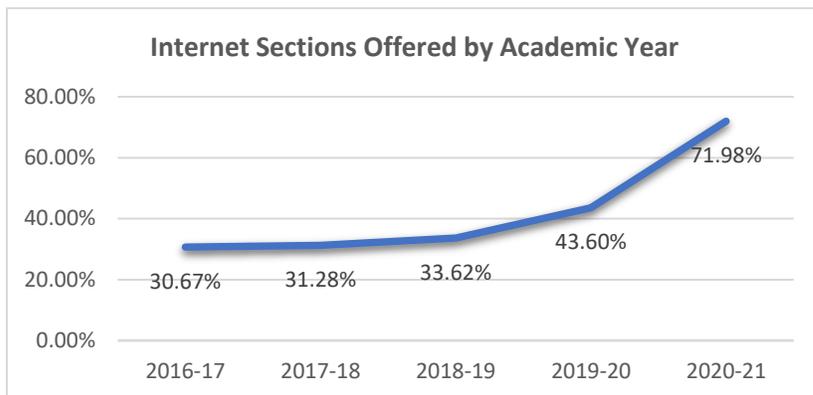
Within this framework, *Institutional Priorities, Goals, and Objectives* were also created. The number one priority identified during the strategic plan development was student success. The new student success vision statement is "*Pitt Community College will foster student success through engaging, inclusive, and quality instruction and by providing equitable support services that enable students to realize their academic and career goals.*" According to the 2018 SACSCOC Resource manual, "The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is "derived from an institution's ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. It reflects and affirms a commitment to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue the institution considers important to improving Student Learning Outcomes and/or student success."

One phenomenon that has consistently been affecting all program areas is the increasing reliance on Internet based instruction. Internet courses are an increasingly popular section option as learning technology platforms become more and more sophisticated. For instance, in 2016-2017 Internet (IN) sections accounted for 30% of the total academic sections offered and Traditional (TR) instructional methods accounted for 50% of all course sections (the remaining composed of independent study and hybrid sections). In 2019-20, the number of IN sections increased to 43% and TR sections fell to 39%. The data gathered consistently shows that student success (achieving a C or better) in Internet classes is

lower than traditional classes. This topic is timely and essential due to the increasing reliance on IN classes, and the transition to online learning necessitated by Covid-19 and the trends toward online education.

In the spring of 2020, PCC leadership selected Lynda Civils, Department Chair of Human Services, and Charles Griffin, Department Chair of Business and Entrepreneurship, as co-chairs of the QEP committee. As a first course of action, the co-chairs reached out to the academic deans for committee members to represent the five academic divisions. The co-chairs and committee members reviewed Internet course data generated during the ongoing planning process at Pitt Community College. One finding, the extent to which Internet instruction sections have increased and the fluctuation of associated Internet course success rates raised attention. Figure 1 shows how IN course sections have increased over the last five years.

Figure 1. Percent of Internet Sections Last Five Years



Additional research from the committee shows differences among Internet and traditional course success. On average, student success rates in Internet courses are lower than those in traditional classes (see Table 1). The gap in student success rates by method of instruction provided an appropriate topic for the QEP. Pitt Community College has met the suggested steps by identifying a topic through ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes that focus on improving student success that has the support of a broad array of college stakeholders. The Pitt Community College's QEP topic to *improve student success rates in Internet courses* is appropriate and aligns with the College mission.

Table 1. Traditional and Internet Instruction Method Success Rates

<b>Instruction Method</b>	<b>2016-17 Success Rate</b>	<b>2017-18 Success Rate</b>	<b>2018-19 Success Rate</b>	<b>2019-20 Success Rate</b>	<b>2020-21 Success Rate</b>
Internet	65.61%	69.99%	69.22%	70.43%	67.16%
Traditional	73.35%	74.58%	76.26%	75.67%	88.88%

**Broad-Based Support (7.2.b)**

The QEP Committee presented the topic to the Student Government Association, the Faculty Senate, the Board of Trustees and the Board's Policy/Program Committee. Additional meetings with senior leaders included the President, Executive Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Student Services, President's Leadership Team, Educational Leadership Team (curriculum deans), and academic department chairs. These trends were presented to a variety of audiences, specifically:

- Student Government Association (fall 2021 and spring 2022)
- Faculty Senate (fall 2021 and spring 2022)
- Board of Trustees Policy Program Committee (2021, 2022)
- Board of Trustees Retreat (2021, 2022)
- Curriculum Advisory Committees

All the above parties agreed this was an essential topic for the QEP. Faculty, staff, and student surveys were conducted in the fall of 2021 to seek support for the QEP topic and to gather information on best practices and ideas to improve student success in Internet classes.

A survey of faculty and staff was conducted to find out best practices and ideas to improve Internet course student success. A student survey was also developed and administered to identify Internet teaching best practices and express their overall satisfaction with Pitt Community College's Internet courses. Results were shared with the QEP Committee and college faculty (see Appendix C and D for survey results). The QEP Co-Chairs and other committee members made presentations about the QEP to over 20 curriculum program advisory boards. PCC's QEP topic was endorsed by internal and external stakeholders as a timely and important topic. As a result of the ongoing communications along with

feedback from the groups above, the QEP topic was identified- *Improving Student Success Rates in Internet Classes*.

### **QEP Focus on Internet Course Student Success (7.2.c)**

Both traditional and Internet course success rates have increased over the last five years. The five-year student success average for the traditional method of instruction is 77.75%, and the five-year student success average for the IN method of instruction is 68.48%.

The goal is to raise student success rates in Internet courses to close the gap between traditional and Internet courses to 5%. The focus of the QEP is to improve student success rates in IN courses (see Table 2). This will be broadly measured by assessing student success rates, defined as achieving a grade of “C” or better.

The differences in success rates between Internet and traditional course prompted the committee to investigate enrollment and success rates in Internet courses taught by full time faculty. To ensure broad impact of the QEP, the committee chose Internet courses with highest enrollments and success rates lower than those of traditional sections to create QEP cohorts (see Table 3). A detailed listing of total students in high enrolled Internet courses over the last five years is in Table 4. To achieve this increase, we seek to improve both student and faculty preparedness, to enhance student success, and to provide continuous review of Internet instruction and best practices.

Table 2. Student Success by Instructional Method

<b>Method</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
Blended				71.58%	76.21%
Cooperative	78.01%	85.87%	82.61%	--	--
Hybrid	67.80%	70.73%	69.96%	70.65%	71.26%
<i>Internet</i>	<i>65.61%</i>	<i>69.99%</i>	<i>69.22%</i>	<i>70.43%</i>	<i>67.16%</i>
Independent Study	95.65%	96.30%	100.00%	--	--
Traditional	73.35%	74.58%	76.26%	75.67%	88.88%
Web-Enhanced	63.31%	69.85%	75.94%	--	--
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>69.49%</b>	<b>72.17%</b>	<b>72.22%</b>	<b>72.46%</b>	<b>68.77%</b>

Table 3. Cohort Internet Courses

<b>Course</b>	<b>2020-21 IN Success</b>	<b>Average Gap</b>
HUM-115	69.71%	7.19%
ENG-111	57.11%	13.58%
MAT-143	58.86%	21.26%
BUS-110	49.15%	5.77%
CIS-110	55.84%	9.05%
COM-120	69.01%	10.47%
PSY-150	75.08%	6.83%

Table 4. Total Enrollments for Cohort Internet Courses

<b>Course</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
BUS-110	376	471	475	502	472
CIS-110	756	667	674	777	745
COM-120	421	498	408	531	710
ENG-111	487	598	646	751	1758
HUM-115	547	609	701	658	766
MAT-143	168	196	182	222	299
PSY-150	709	752	713	846	1216

*Strategy Track #1: Prepare Students for Internet Course Success*

Students in the selected IN courses will demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in an Internet course learning environment. This will be assessed via a Student Success Quiz embedded within Moodle Student Training. The interactive training includes basic instruction in Moodle functionality, resources, and activities as well as time management, campus resources, and study skills identified through the literature review as key for student success.

**Action Steps:**

1. Cohorts of Internet classes will be selected based on criteria including high enrollments and significant success gaps between TR and IN sections.
2. Students in each cohort will receive instruction in the use of Moodle, the College's learning management system (LMS). The assessment method is a student success quiz embedded in the course. See the Moodle Home page training list on page 51.

3. Employ additional online student support personnel.
4. Provide library and learning resources for Internet teaching and learning.

*Strategy Track #1 Outcomes*

1. 100% of students in each cohort will pass the LMS student success quiz.
2. Students in each cohort will receive additional online support from an Online Support Specialist.

*Strategy Track #2: Prepare Faculty for Internet Instruction to Improve Student Success*

Cohort faculty will complete instruction and earn certification in Internet course pedagogy and best practices. Faculty from each selected cohort will introduce one or two active learning or quality enhancement elements to their Internet class. A locally developed *Certified Online Instructor* professional development program (COI) will be part of faculty preparation. The COI course is an intensive and interactive online course designed to help faculty refine and explore online teaching practices and course design. In the COI the faculty will learn strategies to develop multimedia content, explore visual design strategies, ensure course content meets Accessibility (ADA) Standards, and facilitate student learning, investment, and engagement in online classes. These elements will be studied and accounted for during the term for participation in the QEP project. The part time faculty instructional course design position will be tasked with helping administer the COI for cohort faculty.

Action Steps:

1. Cohorts of Internet classes will be selected based on criteria including high enrollments and significant success gaps between TR and IN sections.
2. Cohort faculty will complete locally developed *Certified Online Instructor (COI)* professional development. The training consists of best practices for Internet course instruction.
3. Cohort faculty will complete regularly scheduled quality improvement audits and modifications based on COI best practices.
4. Provide library and learning resources for Internet teaching and learning.

*Strategy Track #2 Outcomes*

1. 100% of cohort faculty will complete COI training.
2. 100% of cohort faculty will review student performance assessments throughout the term to determine if modifications are necessary.
3. 100% of cohort faculty will develop planning and assessment reports for end of semester review and course improvement.

*Strategy Track #3: Promote Consistent Internet Instructional Delivery and Engagement*

Cohort courses will have information in standardized locations. In a fall 2021 *Quality Enhancement Plan Student Survey*, students identified inconsistencies with course information location in Moodle. One student expressed, “Redesign moodle so that it has a more clear [sic] layout. Have more consistency between the instructors on how they operate in Moodle as far as posting things in certain places so that it is the same for all instructors.” In response, a consistently located course information tab will be created. Students also identified additional challenges associated with instructional delivery in IN courses:

Table 5. Quality Enhancement Plan Student Survey Results

<b>Which of the following have your instructors done to promote learning and engagement?</b>	<b>Percent of negative responses</b>
Offered virtual office hours	36%
Posted an introduction video	38%
Provided feedback to the entire class on assignments	53%
Provided individual feedback on assignments	30%

## Action Steps:

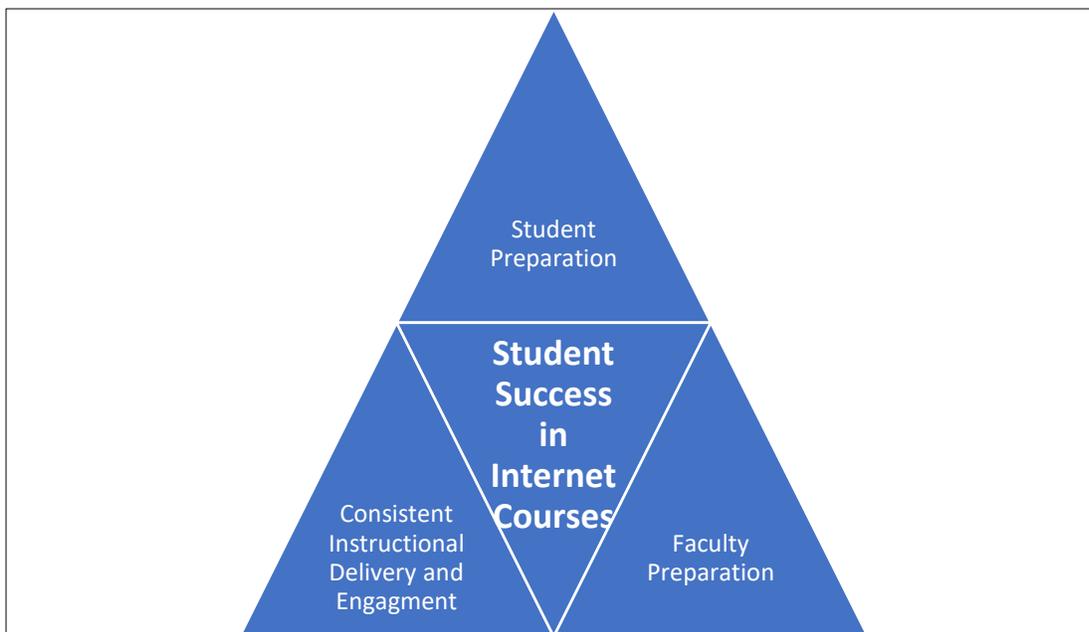
1. Cohorts of Internet classes will be selected based on criteria including high enrollments and significant success gaps between TR and IN sections.
2. Cohort faculty will design and implement consistent LMS launch page content, e.g., syllabi, course schedules, and instructor contact information for cohort courses.
3. Administer the *Quality Enhancement Plan Student Survey* in years two, four, and five.

*Strategy Track #3 Outcomes*

1. 100% of cohort faculty will implement a common and consistent location for course syllabus, course schedules, and faculty contact information.
2. 100% of cohort faculty will offer virtual office hours, post an introduction video, provide individual and class feedback.
3. Subsequent *Quality Enhancement Plan Student Survey* QEP student surveys will show a 5% increase by year five in Table 3 items.

The three strategies listed are modeled on the following page. To lift Internet course success rates, the college will tie faculty preparation, student preparation and consistent instructional delivery and engagement to improved Internet course success rates.

Figure 2. Pitt Community College QEP Model



**Institutional Commitment to the Topic (7.2.d)**

Pitt Community College is committed to the success of students in internet courses as demonstrated by our focus on best practices from the literature and the resources we will use to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

***Best Practices from the Literature***

*Student Preparedness*

A review of best practices in literature revealed several strategies to prepare students for online learning.

There is a need to focus on the following strategies:

1. Improving time-management skills
2. Improving navigation and ease-of-use of the LMS
3. Offering student support services specifically for online students

*Faculty Preparedness*

A review of best practices in literature revealed numerous strategies to prepare faculty for internet instruction to improve student success. When we compare the literature with the results of our QEP Student Survey, we see a need to focus specifically on the following strategies:

1. Requiring Introductions
2. Providing meaningful feedback
3. Making weekly announcements
4. Holding virtual office hours

See Appendix E for full literature review.

***Allocation of Resources***

Improving student success rates in internet classes is a significant priority for Pitt Community College. It plans to allocate approximately \$795,000 over the next five years to support our QEP initiative. Below is a detailed budget that accounts for personnel, professional development, and other costs to implement and assess the QEP over the five-year period, 2022-2027. This budget was developed as part of the college’s overall budgeting process in direct consultation with the President and the leadership team, including the Chief Financial Officer.

**QEP Projected Budget**

Category	Description	Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5 2026-27	Year 6 2027-28
<b>Personnel</b>							
QEP Project Director and Instructional Designer	These positions will be responsible for leadership and	Est \$97,731	Est \$99,566	Est \$101,437	Est \$103,346	Est \$105,293	Est \$107,278

	oversight of the QEP project.						
PT Student Online Support	This position will provide virtual online technical assistance to online students		Est \$25,000				
<b>Total Personnel</b>		<b>\$97,731</b>	<b>\$124,566</b>	<b>\$126,437</b>	<b>\$128,346</b>	<b>\$130,293</b>	<b>\$132,278</b>
<b>Professional Development</b>							
COI Level Completion	Faculty stipends \$100/per	--	--	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Total Pro. Development</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Year 1 2022-23</b>	<b>Year 2 2023-24</b>	<b>Year 3 2024-25</b>	<b>Year 4 2025-26</b>	<b>Year 5 2026-27</b>	<b>Year 6 2027-28</b>
Marketing	These costs cover the marketing of the QEP to the campus and community	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Supplies	Office supplies, material, printing expense, 5 <sup>th</sup> year report expenses.	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Miscellaneous	Covers any overruns or inflationary expenses	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
<b>Total Other Costs</b>		<b>\$8,500</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>

Total Budget

<b>Category</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>2027-28</b>
Total Personnel	\$97,734	\$124,566	\$126,437	\$128,346	\$130,293	\$132,278
Total Pro Develop	\$0	\$0.00	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Other	\$8,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$106,234</b>	<b>129,066</b>	<b>\$140,937</b>	<b>\$142,846</b>	<b>\$144,793</b>	<b>\$146,778</b>

### ***QEP Marketing Plan***

As a part of institutional support, students in our marketing program were tasked with creating a marketing plan for our QEP.

Objectives:

- Create awareness, interest, and support for QEP from campus stakeholders.
  - Customers/Stakeholders:
    - Direct Stakeholders: PCC students, faculty, staff, administrators, and advisors.
    - Indirect Stakeholders: Pitt County community, workforce, and local businesses.
- Materials are developed to communicate and engage QEP stakeholders through promotional efforts. (Logo creation, promotional items, etc.).
- Promotional strategies designed to highlight QEP objectives.

Promotion

- Logo itself as it reflects the PCC QEP goals.
  - QEP Logo Design: Interested students are given specific information on the meaning and importance of QEP, instructions on logo styles with design elements, useful creation resources, and other important information about logo submission.
  - Participating students determine the QEP Topic Brand Name that highlights "Improving Student Success Rates in Online Courses." (Allows students to develop ownership in QEP).
  - The adopted QEP logo will represent Pitt Community College's QEP efforts.
  - The QEP logo will be used to promote its efforts to campus stakeholders.
- Distribute promotional items to faculty and staff. (Marketing students suggested items that will last and not be easily discarded).
  - Faculty/Staff promotional considerations:
    - T-shirts
    - Insulated water bottles/stainless steel

- Coasters
- Mouse pads
- Padfolios

Positioning Strategy:

- Proposed marketing plan will improve online student success and specific goals of PCC's QEP by using a unique logo and distribution of promotional items. This will distinguish the PCC QEP from other institutions. This will position PCC as a college offering various educational opportunities that focus on student success.

Proposed Budget:

- QEP promotional budget for 2022-2023 is \$5,000.
- Logo contest winner will receive \$250 and campus recognition for design creation. Winner is selected by committee based on brand identity, aesthetic appeal, memorability, and functionality.

Distribution:

- The distribution of promotional items to faculty and staff will take place during the fall 2022 Convocation QEP presentation, the culmination of our QEP marketing efforts.

**Plan to Assess Achievement (7.2.e)**

The QEP Director will implement a comprehensive assessment plan aligned with the college's on-going institutional effectiveness plan. The evaluation and assessment plan will monitor QEP action steps and outcomes. Instructional delivery improvement will be generated by the three Action Steps 1) Prepare Students for Internet Learning, 2) Prepare Faculty for Internet instruction, and 3) Promote Consistent Internet Instructional Delivery. The primary measure of the success of the project will be the closing of the achievement gap between Internet and Traditional course success.

The QEP Director will annually collect and report all assessment data through an institutional QEP Outcomes Assessment Report, in addition to collecting and analyzing data each semester to assess the QEP progress and recommend necessary improvements. The Planning and Research Department will provide appropriate support to the QEP Director in the data collection and analysis processes via its online institutional planning and assessment system. At each level of the process data will be collected, analyzed, and reported. The QEP Director will report to the Vice President of Planning and Research.

Formative assessments will occur each semester beginning with the Pilot Cohort. The QEP Director, with assistance from the Faculty Instructional Designer, will maintain an ongoing evaluation plan that monitors each cohort of internet courses, their enrollment, QEP activities, and student success rates. This document will grow and become comprehensive through the entirety of the QEP.

An annual summative assessment will be conducted and reported by the QEP Director during the fall semester following each academic year of cohort activity. This assessment will monitor the progress of the strategy outcomes as they seek to close the gap between student success in traditional and internet courses.

The QEP is integrated into the institutional planning and assessment process. Note inclusion of the QEP in model. This ensures the QEP is part of the institutional assessment and planning processes.

Pitt Community College  
 Planning and Assessment for  
 Effectiveness and Student Achievement

Institution Mission & Values



**Institutional Priorities**

1. Student Success
2. Workforce Development
3. Equity
4. Organizational Development and Accountability

**Performance Criteria**

1. 2020-2025 Institutional Strategic Plan *Objectives*
2. NC Community College Performance Measures
3. Student Achievement for 6-Year Student Outcomes\*
4. QEP Outcomes Improve Internet Course Success



Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)  
 Operational Outcomes (OPOs)  
 QEP Outcomes  
 Finalized & Posted to Planning/Assessment  
 Module by **beginning of November**

Compile & Post Results  
 Describe *Strategies to Improve*  
**DUE End October**

Implement Activities  
 (do the work)  
**Fall & Spring Terms**

Evaluate Activities  
 Measure Performance  
 Compare with Outcomes  
 & Benchmarks  
**Summer & Early Fall**

\*Key Student Completion Indicator for SACSCOC (NSC 6 year completion rate)

Adapted from Shaffer, J. (Summer 2011). "Connecting Planning and Resource Allocation to Mission Achievement." *Leadership*. 17(2). 15-25.

The timeline listed below shows in general terms the QEP Director will manage the project.

QEP 5-Year Timeline

<b>Time/Term</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Fall 2022	Hire QEP Director	EVP	Position begins October 1, 2022	
Fall 2022	Prepare QEP plan for spring pilot activity	QEP Director	Select three faculty from identified IN courses	
Fall 2022	Work with SACSCOC Liaison on any response to QEP recommendation(s)	SACSCOC Liaison, QEP Director, EVP, President	Submit response by deadline	Standard 7.2 (QEP) recommendations issued from On-Site review team
Fall 2022	Arrange COI schedule for spring 2023.	Teaching and Learning Director, QEP Director	Posted schedule for cohort faculty by December 1, 2022	
Fall 2022	Identify Part-Time Faculty Instructional Designer	EVP, QEP Director	Position begins October 1, 2022	
Fall 2022	Select Faculty Cohort for Spring 2023	QEP Director		This pilot cohort will be comprised of faculty who have already completed COI training.
Fall Terms 2023-2025	Select Faculty Cohort for following Fall	QEP Director	Ongoing	
Spring Terms 2023-2026	Select Faculty Cohort for following Spring	QEP Director	Ongoing	
Fall 2023	QEP Student Survey administration	QEP Director	Results reported by December 1 <sup>st</sup> .	
Fall 2025	QEP Student Survey administration	QEP Director	Results reported by December 1 <sup>st</sup> .	
Fall 2026	QEP Student Survey administration	QEP Director	Results reported by December 1 <sup>st</sup> .	

## **QEP Development Timeline**

### **Fall 2020: QEP Planning Stage**

- QEP Co-Chairs selected by President Rouse with input from the Presidents Leadership Team and the Educational Leadership Team
- Co-Chairs meet with Dr. Brian Miller, Executive Director, Planning and Research and Dr. Thomas Gould, Vice-President, Academic Affairs and Student Services to review SACSCOC Standard 7.2
- Co-Chairs consult with Academic Deans to select QEP Committee members from each academic division as well as distance education, and teaching and learning
- QEP Committee meets with President Rouse, Vice-President Gould, and Dr. Miller to review QEP best practices
- QEP Chairs and as many members as possible attend SACSCOC Conference in December 2020

### **Spring 2021: QEP Topic Identification**

- QEP Committee reviews empirical data derived from the PCC Strategic Plan, Achieving the Dream data, and Institutional Research; consults with the Student Government Association, the Faculty Senate as well as feedback from division representatives for QEP topic ideas
- GPA analysis of student success (achieving a final grade of A,B,C in the course) by instructional method. Data analysis by QEP Committee and identification of additional data set research (retention by method, selected course withdrawal rates, to name a few)
- QEP draft topic identified as improving online learning via faculty and student development, and to develop a system for online office hours for faculty availability. May 2021
- QEP Committee members to give QEP presentations to campus-wide advisory boards to establish additional external stakeholder support. April, May, June 2021. Establish schedule to involve QEP committee members. Report general findings if committees support the promoted ideas and direction.

**Summer 2021: QEP Topic Identification Continued**

- QEP Committee with help from the Coordinator, Institutional Survey Research to develop campus-wide survey including faculty, staff, and students about QEP topic seeking both input and campus-wide stakeholder support. May 2021
- QEP Committee members to give QEP presentations (continued). Report general findings from advisory committee presentations about the QEP ideas and direction
- Begin to develop formal outcomes statements. Ensure relevant, appropriate, and observable results
- Student success study of locally developed online instructional courses

**Fall 2021: QEP Topic Finalized**

- Conduct campus-wide survey. September 2021
- Literature review, bibliography of current literature, analysis of survey data. October 2021
- QEP topic finalized, plan to assess achievement finalized
- Detail human, technology, and financial resources for project over the 5-year span
- PCC can recommend 2 QEP Lead Evaluators
- Begin to develop plans for resources and other items such as organizational chart fit, any personnel needs or other HR or IT needs
- Identifying learning roadblocks at the course level to begin selecting pilot cohort
- Develop QEP Marketing Plan
- Revise professional development plan for online faculty
- Update Faculty Senate on QEP progress

**Spring 2022: Draft Proposal Development**

- Launch marketing and professional development efforts for QEP.
- QEP co-chairs meet with department chairs for pilot instructor selection
- Development of full QEP project timeline
- Draft of QEP finalized

**Summer 2022: QEP Submitted**

- PCC formally submits its QEP as an accompanying document to the Institutional Focus Report. Early August 2022
- Selection, installation, and training of QEP Coordinator
- Finalize professional development requirements
- Finalize pilot cohort selected
- QEP Committee, Dr. Rouse, Dr. Gould, and Dr. Miller review QEP report. June – July 2022

**Fall 2022: QEP Implementation**

- Development and Implementation of pilot phase with the purpose of testing outcomes
- Onsite review September 26-29, 2022.
- Spring cohort COI training begins
- Selection, installation, and training of Online Student Support Specialist
- Ensuring Online Excellence Committee selection and training begins

## References

- Bettinger, E. P., Fox, L., Loeb, S., & Taylor, E. S. (2017). Virtual Classrooms: How Online College Courses Affect Student Success. *American Economic Review*, *107*(9), 2855-2875.
- Cavinato, A. G., Hunter, R. A, Ott, L. S., & Robinson, J. K. (2021). Promoting Student Interaction, Engagement, and Success in an Online Environment. *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*, *413*, 1513-1520.
- Crews, T. B., Wilkinson, K., & Neill, J. K. (2015). Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education: Effective Online Course Design to Assist Students' Success. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, *11*(1), 87-103.
- Curry, M. (2019). The Perceptions of Online Community College Instructors Regarding the Most Effective Collaborative Instructional, Content Specific, and Social Interaction Learning Strategies to Help Online Students Succeed.
- Frankel, A. S., Friedman, L., Mansell, J., & Ibrahim, J. K. (2020). Steps Towards Success: Faculty Training to Support Online Student Learning. *The Journal of Faculty Development*, *34*(2), 23-32.
- Glazier, R. A. (2016). Building Rapport to Improve Retention and Success in Online Classes. *Journal of Political Science Education*, *12*(4), 437-456.
- Glazier, R. A., & Harris, H. S. (2020). How Teaching with Rapport Can Improve Online Student Success and Retention. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, *21*(4), 1-17.
- Jaggers, S. S., & Xu, D. (2016). How Do Online Course Design Features Influence Student Performance? *Computers and Education*, *95*, 270-284.
- Joosten, T., & Cusatis, R. (2019). A Cross-Institutional Study of Instructional Characteristics and Student Outcomes: Are Quality Indicators of Online Courses Able to Predict Student Success? *Online Learning Journal*, *23*(4), 354-378.
- Kauffman, H. (2015). A Review of Predictive Factors of Student Success in and Satisfaction with Online Learning. *Research in Learning Technology*, *23*.

- Khan, A., Egbue, O., Palkie, B., & Madden, J. (2017). Active Learning: Engaging Students to Maximize Learning in an Online Course. *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 15(2), 107-115.
- Lammers, W. J., & Gillaspay, J. A. Jr. (2013). Brief Measure of Student-Instructor Rapport Predicts Student Success in Online Courses. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 7(2), Article 16. <https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsofl.2013.070216>
- Long, J. A. (2014). The Effects of Faculty Professional Development on Student Success and Online Class Interactivity in Community Colleges.
- Martin, A. M. (2021). Instructor Qualities and Student Success in Higher Education Online Courses. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 37(1), 65-80.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2020.1815106>
- Meyer, K. A. (2014). How Community College Faculty Members May Improve Student Learning Productivity in Their Online Courses. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 38(6), 575-587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2012.676501>
- Murillo, A. P., & Jones, K. M. L. (2020). A “Just-In-Time” Pragmatic Approach to Creating Quality Matters-Informed Online Courses. *Information and Learning Sciences*, 121(5/6), 365-380.
- Park, E., Martin, F., & Lambert, R. (2019). Examining Predictive Factors for Student Success in a Hybrid Learning Course. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 20(2), 11-27.
- Shelton, B. E., Hung, J., & Lowenthal, P. R. (2017). Predicting Student Success by Modeling Student Interaction in Asynchronous Online Courses. *Distance Education*, 38(1), 59-69.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2017.1299562>
- Simplicio, J. (2019). Strategies to Improve Online Student Academic Success and Increase University Persistence Rates. *Education*, 139(3), 173–177.
- Tirrell, T., & Quick, D. (2012). Chickering’s Seven Principles of Good Practice: Student Attrition in Community College Online Courses. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 36(8), 580–590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920903054907>

Ulfa, S., & Fatawi, I. (2021). Predicting Factors That Influence Students' Learning Outcomes Using Learning Analytics in Online Learning Environment. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 16(1), <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v16i01.16325>

Wandler, J. B., & Imbriale, W. J. (2017). Promoting Undergraduate Student Self-Regulation in Online Learning Environments. *Online Learning*, 21(2).

[Wei, H., Peng, H., & Chou, C. \(2015\). Can More Interactivity Improve Learning Achievement in an Online Course? Effects of College Students' Perception and Actual Use of a Course-Management System on Their Learning Achievement. \*Computers and Education\*, 83, 10-21.](#)

PLD - <https://www.openlms.net/blog/education/uncovering-the-personalized-learning-designer-pld/>

QM -

<https://www.qualitymatters.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/StandardsfromtheQMHigherEducationRubric.pdf>

UDL - <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

Tilt - <https://tilthighered.com/tiltexamplesandresources>

SoTL - <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/studying-engaged-learning/what-is-sotl/>

## **Appendices**

### ***Appendix A. PCC Mission, Strategic Plan, and Goals***

#### **Mission Statement**

Pitt Community College educates and empowers people for success. With a culture of excellence and innovation, the college is a vital partner in the economic and workforce development of our community.

PCC provides access to dynamic learning opportunities designed to foster personal enrichment, successful career preparation, and higher education transfer.

#### **Strategic Planning**

1. Focuses on what the college as a whole will do to position for the future.
2. Addresses large-scale issues affecting the college.
3. Relies on input from internal and external environments; and
4. Provides direction for operational activities throughout the college.

#### **Student Success Vision Statement**

Pitt Community College will foster student success through engaging, inclusive and quality instruction and by providing equitable support services that enable students to realize their academic and career goals.

#### **Institutional Priorities and Goals**

##### **Priority One: Student Success**

Goal #1: Increase student persistence and completion.

Goal #2: Provide quality, student centered services and processes.

##### **Priority Two: Workforce Development**

Goal #3: Strengthen workforce development and student and community partnerships.

##### **Priority Three: Equity**

Goal #4: Assist faculty and staff to develop an awareness of equity and cultural competence.

Goal #5: Create a campus-wide equity agenda that focuses on addressing achievement gaps in student learning and success.

Goal #6: Develop strategies for more effective recruitment of diverse faculty and staff.

**Priority Four: Organizational Development and Accountability**

Goal #7: Build a culture of inquiry wherein data are used for sound decision-making and continuous improvement.

Goal #8: Strengthen professional development for faculty and staff to enhance their understanding and implementation of best practices for diverse student populations.

Goal #9: Develop and implement strategies for inclusive, intentional, and transparent planning and decision-making.

***Appendix B. List of Individuals***

**President's Leadership Team**

Dr. Thomas Gould, Executive Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Student Services

Dr. Ina Rawlinson, Vice-President, Human Resources

Mr. Ricky Brown, Vice-President, Financial Services and Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Johnny Smith, Vice-President, Strategic Initiatives

Ms. Marianne Cox, Vice-President, Institutional Advancement

Dr. Brian Miller, Vice-President, Planning and Research

**QEP Development Team**

Chuck Griffin (Co-Chair), Department Chair, Business and Entrepreneurship

Lynda Civils (Co-Chair), Department Chair, Human Services

Happy Gingras, Director, Teaching and Learning

Kenneth Peel, Distance Learning, Content Creation Specialist

Kelli Johnson, Faculty, Business Administration

Charmaine Smith, Coordinator, Computer Technology

Matt Amante, Faculty, Fine Arts

Brook Cathey, Faculty, Psychology

Tony Gallardo, Coordinator, Industrial Systems Technology

Teresa Griffith, Faculty, Nuclear Medicine Technology

Tonya Leggett, Faculty, Human Services, Gerontology

Karen Moody, Coordinator, Healthcare Management

Valentina Holder, Faculty, Administrative Healthcare Technology

Mandy Bowers, Coordinator, Marketing

Dr. Thomas Gould, Executive Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Student Services

*Appendix C. Employee Survey and Results*



**Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Faculty and Staff Survey - Fall 2021**

We need your help! Please share your best practices and ideas to improve student success in online classes with the QEP team.

According to the 2018 SACSCOC Resource manual, “The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is an integral component of the reaffirmation of accreditation process and is derived from an institution’s ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. It reflects and affirms a commitment to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue the institution considers important to improving student learning outcomes and/or student success.”

As a result of the ongoing process to yield a new strategic plan led by the ATD Steering Team, staff from the Planning and Research Department, feedback from the SGA, Faculty Senate, and QEP Committee members representing the academic divisions, the QEP topic was identified.

PCC’s QEP topic is “Improving Student Success Rates in Online Classes”. The data gathered consistently shows that student success (achieving a C or better) in online classes is significantly lower than traditional classes. This topic is timely and necessary due to the switch over to online learning necessitated by COVID-19 and the trends toward online education in general.

Please complete the following brief survey for this important research.

<b>Pitt Community College Student Success</b>					
<b>Method of Instruction Comparison</b>					
<b>Method</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21*</b>
Blended				71.58%	76.21%
Cooperative	78.01%	85.87%	82.61%		
Hybrid	67.80%	70.73%	69.96%	70.65%	71.26%
Internet	65.61%	69.99%	69.22%	70.43%	67.16%
Independent Study	95.65%	96.30%	100.00%		
Traditional	73.35%	74.58%	76.26%	75.67%	88.88%
Web-Enhanced	63.31%	69.85%	75.94%		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>69.49%</b>	<b>72.17%</b>	<b>72.22%</b>	<b>72.46%</b>	<b>68.77%</b>

Includes Covid Terms

\*Majority of Summer 2021 excluded. No other exclusions

Success is grade "C" or better

**1. Please rate the following items as they pertain to student success in online classes:**

	1 = Not Important	2 = Moderately Important	3 = Very Important
1. Moodle training for faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Faculty online pedagogy/course training (COI-Course Design)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Mandatory Moodle training for students embedded in the course (like our HR training, interactive videos with questions, no failure but requires completion before starting the course)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Faculty online office hours for online courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Available technology (smart classrooms/WebEx so students can view an actual live or recorded class online)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Technology Training [how to create micro-learning lessons; how to create successful video lectures]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Course Onboarding for students (Course Navigation/Video by instructor)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Real-time Communication [chat]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Creation of standard campus, divisional or departmental Moodle template	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

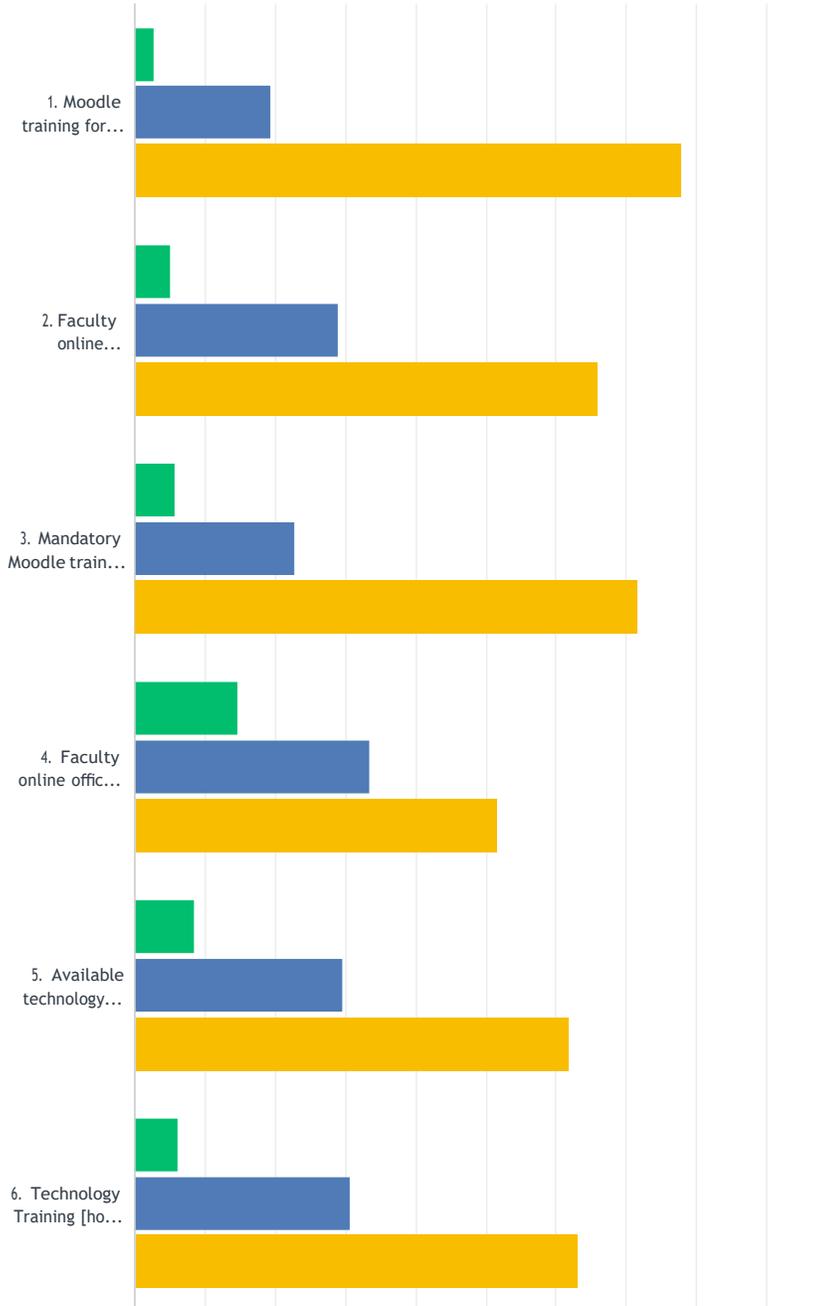
**2. Please share any other suggestions or comments for improving student success in online courses.**

**Thank You!**

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Faculty and Staff Survey - Fall 2021 Results

1. Please rate the following items as they pertain to student success in online classes:

Answered: 177 Skipped: 0



1 / 2

	<b>1 = NOT IMPORTANT</b>	<b>2 = MODERATELY IMPORTANT</b>	<b>3 = VERY IMPORTANT</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1. Moodle training for faculty	2.84% 5	19.32% 34	77.84% 137	176
2. Faculty online pedagogy/course training (COI-Course Design)	5.11% 9	28.98% 51	65.91% 116	176
3. Mandatory Moodle training for students embedded in the course (like our HR training, interactive videos with questions, no failure but requires completion before starting the course)	5.68% 10	22.73% 40	71.59% 126	176
4. Faculty online office hours for online courses	14.77% 26	33.52% 59	51.70% 91	176
5. Available technology (smart classrooms/WebEx so students can view an actual live or recorded class online)	8.52% 15	29.55% 52	61.93% 109	176
6. Technology Training [how to create micro-learning lessons; how to create successful video lectures]	6.25% 11	30.68% 54	63.07% 111	176
7. Course Onboarding for students (Course Navigation/Video by instructor)	7.39% 13	32.39% 57	60.23% 106	176
8. Real-time Communication [chat]	14.29% 25	38.86% 68	46.86% 82	175
9. Creation of standard campus, divisional or departmental Moodle template	25.14% 44	34.86% 61	40.00% 70	175

**Appendix D. QEP Student Survey and Results**



**Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Student Survey - Fall 2021**

We need your help! Please share your best practices and ideas to improve student success in online classes with the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) team.

According to the 2018 SACSCOC Resource manual, “The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is an integral component of the reaffirmation of accreditation process and is derived from an institution’s ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. It reflects and affirms a commitment to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue the institution considers important to improving student learning outcomes and/or student success.”

As a result of the ongoing process to yield a new strategic plan led by the ATD Steering Team, staff from the Planning and Research Department, feedback from the SGA, Faculty Senate, and QEP Committee members representing the academic divisions, the QEP topic was identified.

PCC’s QEP topic is “Improving Student Success Rates in Online Classes”. The data gathered consistently shows that student success (achieving a C or better) in online classes is significantly lower than traditional classes. This topic is timely and necessary due to the switch over to online learning necessitated by COVID-19 and the trends toward online education in general.

<b>Pitt Community College Student Success Method of Instruction Comparison</b>					
<b>Method</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21*</b>
Blended				71.58%	76.21%
Cooperative	78.01%	85.87%	82.61%		
Hybrid	67.80%	70.73%	69.96%	70.65%	71.26%
Internet	65.61%	69.99%	69.22%	70.43%	67.16%
Independent Study	95.65%	96.30%	100.00%		
Traditional	73.35%	74.58%	76.26%	75.67%	88.88%
Web-Enhanced	63.31%	69.85%	75.94%		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>69.49%</b>	<b>72.17%</b>	<b>72.22%</b>	<b>72.46%</b>	<b>68.77%</b>

Includes Covid Terms

\*Majority of Summer 2021 excluded. No other exclusions

Success is grade "C" or better

online course.

**1 = Most Beneficial and 14 = Least Beneficial**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructor offered virtual office hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructor offered or required synchronous class meetings via the web
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructor posted an introduction video
<input type="checkbox"/>	Posted video/audio lectures
<input type="checkbox"/>	Posted discussion forums
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hosted virtual study groups/sessions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provided/Required peer discussions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Required group projects
<input type="checkbox"/>	Required a community service project

**1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the online learning education provided to you at Pitt Community College (PCC)?**

- 1 = Very Dissatisfied
- 2 = Dissatisfied
- 3 = Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
- 4 = Satisfied
- 5 = Very Satisfied

Comments:

**2. Thinking of all your online courses, which of the following have your instructors done to promote learning and engagement? (Select all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered virtual office hours                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Required group projects  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered/Required synchronous class meetings via the web | <input type="checkbox"/> Required a community service project                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posted an introduction video                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Posted/Offered campus resources including tutoring, counseling, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posted video/audio lectures                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided feedback to the entire class on assignments                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posted discussion forums                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Provided individual feedback on assignments                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hosted virtual study groups/sessions                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Responded to emails quickly (Within 24 hours M-F)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provided/Required peer discussions                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent reminders for due dates, assignments, etc.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)                                  |   |

online course.

**1 = Most Beneficial and 14 = Least Beneficial**

 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Instructor offered virtual office hours
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Instructor offered or required synchronous class meetings via the web
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Instructor posted an introduction video
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Posted video/audio lectures
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Posted discussion forums
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Hosted virtual study groups/sessions
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Provided/Required peer discussions
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Required group projects
 <input type="checkbox"/> 	Required a community service project
	



Provided feedback to the entire class on assignments



Provided individual feedback on assignments



Responded to emails quickly (Within 24 hours M-F)



Sent reminders for due dates, assignments, etc.



**4. What else could PCC do to help improve student success (defined as students receiving an A, B, or C in the course) in online classes?**

**Thank You!**

## Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Student Survey - Fall 2021 Results

- Overall, how satisfied are you with the online learning education provided to you at Pitt Community College (PCC)?

Answered: 309 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1 = Very Dissatisfied	6.15% 19
2 = Dissatisfied	6.15% 19
3 = Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	11.33% 35
4 = Satisfied	45.63% 141
5 = Vert Satisfied	30.74% 95
Total	309

- Thinking of all your online courses, which of the following have your instructors done to promote learning and engagement? (Select all that apply)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Offered virtual office hours	63.96% 197
Offered/Required synchronous class meetings via the web	34.74% 107
Posted an introduction video	61.69% 190
Posted video/audio lectures	61.69% 190
Posted discussion forums	74.03% 228
Hosted virtual study groups/sessions	16.23% 50
Provided/Required peer discussions	35.71% 110
Required group projects	16.23% 50
Required a community service project	7.79% 24
Posted/Offered campus resources including tutoring, counseling, etc.	59.09% 182
Provided feedback to the entire class on assignments	47.08% 145
Provided individual feedback on assignments	69.81% 215
Responded to emails quickly (Within 24 hours M-F)	72.08% 222
Sent reminders for due dates, assignments, etc.	80.52% 248

### ***Appendix E. Literature Review***

A thorough review of the literature was conducted to determine the best practices to improve student success in online courses. To improve student success in online courses it is imperative that faculty complete interactive training to prepare them for online instruction. It is also imperative that students complete interactive training to prepare them for online learning.

More and more students are enrolling in online classes, yet they are finding it difficult to juggle the everyday demands of life with online classes. As a result, they simply lose interest. Maintaining student's interest has been reported to be the primary reason students do not successfully complete their online courses. Simplicio (2019) offers five strategies that may help students finish the classes that they have started:

- Conduct a thorough evaluation to determine if the student has the entry level skills and resources to take an online course, before the student registers for an online class.
- Choose instructors who can interact compassionately with the students but who can also competently create courses with a variety of ways in which the students' knowledge and skills can be assessed.
- Assign a group project for the initial assignment.
- Utilize the discussion boards and schedule a one on one with students.
- Develop a campus support system to promote the student's success.

Glazier and Harris (2020) explain that by 2019, about one-third of all college students were enrolled in at least one online class. Ulfa and Fatawi (2021) explain that technology has played a big part in changing the current educational landscape. Online learning usage has increased significantly and has become even more popular during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, instructors should be providing quality learning experiences for their students. Joosten and Cusatis (2019) mention how online courses are continuing to grow in demand due to students needing flexibility in response to family, work, and other obligations.

According to Bettinger, Fox, Loeb, and Taylor (2017), online course offerings and face-to-face course offerings are typically nearly identical. Both course formats utilize the same syllabus and textbook. They both typically consist of the same assignments, quizzes, and tests. The major difference is how communication is handled. Lectures and class discussions are all conducted during a certain time in the classroom with face-to-face classes. With online courses, in person class discussions are often replaced with online forums/discussion boards, while in person lectures are often replaced with videos made available by the instructor. Colleges attempt to replicate face-to-face sections with online sections, but interactions (student-professor and student-student) are virtual and asynchronous. However, Rebecca Glazier (2016) explains that online students tend to withdraw more often than their counterparts in face-to-face courses and also tend to earn lower grades than their counterparts in face-to-face courses.

Bettinger, Fox, Loeb and Taylor's (2017) estimates provided evidence that:

Taking a course online reduces student achievement in that course, as measured by grades, by about one-third of a standard deviation. Taking a course online also reduces student grades in future courses by one-eighth of a standard deviation and reduces the probability of remaining enrolled a year later by over ten percentage points (2857).

The data they studied showed that taking a class online had negative effects on student success.

### **Faculty Preparedness for Online Instruction**

According to Frankel, Friedman, Mansell, and Ibrahim (2020), there has been huge growth in online course offerings in recent years, however, this “rapid growth in online learning and technology has not been paired with comparable growth in pedagogical training for faculty teaching online” (23). Faculty need the appropriate training to be able to transition to online teaching to make sure students are receiving high quality education and are being set-up to be successful (Barker, 2003; Frass, Rucker, & Washington, 2017). Frankel, Friedman, Mansell, and Ibrahim (2020) mention that at their college (Temple University), the number of online course offerings has increased (from 110 in 2015-2016 to 167 in 2018-2019), yet there was no required training for their faculty to ensure they were adequately prepared to teach their courses online. A self-paced learning system was developed for their college to assist their faculty

teaching online courses to promote quality online education and assist with faculty development. “The key is that a system for identifying needs and supporting faculty preparing to teach online is necessary for faculty satisfaction teaching online and student success in the course” (Frankel, Friedman, Mansell, and Ibrahim, 31).

Curry (2019) explains how course design, instructor behavior, and instructor-student and student-student communication were the strongest predictors of student learning outcomes and successful course completion (Eom and Ashill 2006). Jagers and Xu (2016) explain that it is often the instructor-student interaction for what creates an online environment where students are truly committed to the course and tend to perform well in the course. Lammers and Gillaspay (2013) offer some recommendations for building instructor/student rapport in online courses and stress that the effort has to be much more deliberate in online courses when compared to face-to-face classes (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2012) and also really has to focus on the use of technology (Helms et al., 2011). Suggestions included having an introductory video, online discussions (Helms, et al., 2011), welcoming email, prompt responses to emails, and also sending constant emails throughout the duration of the semester (Sull, 2006). Regarding faculty preparedness, Curry (2019) mentions how important it is to provide instructors with professional development opportunities to give them the skills they need to create and maintain quality online teaching (Shea, Fredericksen, Pickett, and Pelz, 2003).

Curry (2019) explains that instructor communication needs to happen constantly. Instructors should be contacting their online students prior to or on the course start date via email or video or an announcement on the course website that will provide students with how to access and navigate through the course, as well as a preview of what students can expect regarding assignments, exams, etc. This constant interaction and communication should be built into the online course design for the duration of the course with announcements, direct instruction, and feedback (Riggs & Linder, 2006).

Curry (2019) conducted a study to determine what collaborative instructional, content specific, and social interaction learning strategies that online community college instructors found to be most effective

for helping students succeed. As far as instructional strategies that were perceived to foster collaboration, the following six major themes emerged from her study:

1. Assigning mandatory discussion boards
2. Getting students accountable and involved
3. Fostering connections through small groups and projects
4. Encouraging student-to-student talk
5. Requiring introductions
6. Assigning peer review activities

As far as content specific learning strategies perceived to foster collaboration, the following major themes emerged from her study:

1. Using content to foster collaboration
2. Making content appropriate for student objectives
3. Using relevant, real world content
4. Using content to engage students
5. Designing content-specific group projects
6. Using technology as a content catalyst

For instructional strategies perceived to support instructor-student interaction, the following major themes emerged from her study:

1. Providing clear instructions
2. Being as responsive as possible
3. Providing meaningful feedback
4. Grading to well-defined criteria
5. Making weekly announcements
6. Holding virtual office hours

Curry (2019) also discovered some major themes emerge dealing with student-student interactions to promote success. They were as follows:

1. Providing opportunities for students to engage in introductions and icebreakers
2. Requiring weekly discussion topics
3. Creating group projects
4. Relating real human experiences to peers
5. Using technology to foster interaction

Curry (2019) drew three conclusions from her study in an effort to increase online student success: Faculty need more training to help with implementing strategies to encourage group work and collaboration; online courses need engaging, collaborative content with real world applications; and consistent and systematic instructor-student and student-student interactions are needed.

Tirrell and Quick (2012), conducted a quantitative study of three of the colleges within the Virginia Community College System. The participants of this study consisted of faculty, both full and part time (n=111), who taught at least one online course during the 2006-2007 academic year. The researchers used the Chickering Seven Principles for Good Practice rubric as the instrumentation to assess the instructional practices and student's attrition rate within these online courses. Their study revealed that there is a strong correlation between effective online course design and student retention. It further suggested that the most successful courses were designed with content that required student engagement and various learning activities with ongoing support from the faculty.

Khan, Egbue, Palkie, and Madden (2017) conducted a survey and found that only 67% of all respondents had received some type of formal training for teaching online courses (to include national level training, institute level training, and also an education or degree in an online education). The rest, 33%, were self-taught. According to Long (2014) there are very few community colleges in the country that have mandatory faculty professional development programs that provide training to those faculty in online pedagogy and facilitation. In a study conducted by Long (2014), she concluded that for faculty that participated in voluntary and mandatory professional development programs, it resulted in higher than average student success rates. Long (2014) concluded that faculty members need to be provided with a wide array of professional development before teaching their first online course, including better access to

collaboration with peer and mentor online faculty members. In her study she found that faculty members needed more than just training on technology basics to ensure student success in online courses. Long (2014) also concluded that community colleges should institute an online faculty mentoring program where new online faculty members are paired with more experienced online faculty members to guide them in their first semester teaching online. Her interview data showed that the majority of those faculty members interviewed believed that a faculty mentoring program was needed to increase student success in online courses.

In “Instructor Qualities and Student Success in Higher Education Online Courses,” Martin (2021) explains how she conducted a study that included 166 volunteer instructors and all of their students (63,320) from a large Midwestern university. All the 166 instructors taught an online course with a 5-semester window (Fall 2014-Spring 2016) and a like traditional course. A multivariate linear regression found that the instructor qualities of years of experience, level or education, and practical experience predicted 5.6% of student achievement in online courses. An instructor’s level or training predicted 2.1% of student achievement in online courses. The author notes that while these instructor qualities that make up the overall formula for student success is small, it does help us to begin to understand some of the factors that are impacting student success in online courses. An interesting finding from the study was that formal training alone for instructors actually did not seem to be enough. Formal training along with informal training from a colleague with online course teaching experience then significantly improved student achievement. Martin (2021) also went on to explain that instructor training should be chosen according to best teaching practices and applicable to the instructor’s content.

In “How Community College Faculty Members May Improve Student Learning Productivity in Their Online Courses,” Meyer (2014) explains that faculty members truly need professional development to actually learn how to teach online. Meyer (2014) then goes on to say that this professional development needs to be provided in regard to the instructor’s discipline, course, and student body (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005). Instructors need to be able to design a learning environment that “takes students from where they are and moves them through the learning they need to achieve” (Meyer, 577). It is faculty

training/professional development that will assist with this as teaching online requires much more attention towards different pedagogies, approaches, and tailoring to specific student needs when compared to teaching face-to-face in the classroom.

In “A ‘Just-in-Time’ Pragmatic Approach to Creating Quality Matters-Informed Online Courses,” Murillo and Jones (2020) explain how many instructors recently have had to quickly switch their face-to-face classes to online classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they then go on to explain that most instructors do not have the needed online education expertise. Quality Matters (QM) is a way to help with this and can provide the needed structure and guidance to help out with creating high-quality learning environments. Murillo and Jones (2020) explain: “QM is a research and standards-based online education and course design quality assurance system” (366). In 2006, QM actually became a self-supporting organization that certifies online courses and trains faculty in QM (Bento and White, 2010). Now, the QM Rubric is the national standard for evaluating the quality of online courses. Faculty as well as student perceptions of the quality of online courses improve when QM online course templates are utilized. A study was conducted, and it was found that of the 42 specific review standards, 16 (38%) were easily achievable, 20 (48%) were achievable, but required some intervention, and 6 (14%) were difficult to achieve through a course template. QM certification requires a formal peer-review process; however, through course modifications (including a course introduction, communication expectations, technology requirements, grading policy, etc.), educators can achieve a QM-informed course design. These modifications should then significantly enhance the online learning experience for both instructors and students.

Glazier and Harris (2020) presented data from two studies that showed how faculty who established rapport with their students through positive relationships and communication were more likely to retain them. Cavinato, Hunter, Ott, and Robinson (2021) stressed the importance of small-group, active learning exercises in the classroom and how those experiences then lead to “improvements in academic achievement, better reasoning and critical thinking skills, increased retention of students, and improved relationships with faculty and other students” (1513). They conducted a survey of nearly 6,000 students

and faculty after the initial phase of remote learning at Indiana University and found that very few online classes were actually able to provide for these active learning experiences that are crucial for student success. They found that students were having far fewer interactions with their fellow classmates and also with their instructors which then resulted in more difficulty with completing coursework. Replicating the in-person communication that students experience when in the classroom is so very important in terms of student success. From their survey of 6,000 students and faculty, Cavinato, Hunter, Ott, and Robinson (2021) recommended that future online courses should include “creating opportunities for communication between students and instructors and fostering a sense of community through virtual student-to-student interactions” (1513).

Crews, Wilkinson, and Neill (2015) explain that the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education transfer well to the online classroom and could be very beneficial to enhance student success (Guidera, 2004; Phipps, 2005). They mention that the seven principles could very well improve teaching and learning with online classes. A conclusion drawn from this would then be that when followed correctly, these principles should be able to improve student success in online courses.

The seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education are as follows:

1. Encourage contact between students and faculty.
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Encourage active learning.
4. Give prompt feedback.
5. Emphasize time on task.
6. Communicate high expectations.
7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning. (Chickering and Gamson, 1991)

According to Wei, Peng, and Chou (2015), interactivity has been viewed as playing an essential role in the learning process among learners, instructors, and learning content. It is presumed to occur in all learning environments including formal education and informal education (Bernard et al., 2009; Ke, 2013). Learners can interact with peers and instructors to exchange and share their knowledge.

Meanwhile, they can construct new knowledge and reorganize prior knowledge from this interaction process (Kang & Im, 2013). As Song and McNary (2011) concluded, students' interaction is always an indispensable and fundamental component of their knowledge acquisition and cognitive development in traditional face-to-face learning settings.

### **Student Preparedness for Online Learning**

In recent years, researchers have examined student characteristics and behaviors that contribute to student success in internet courses (Berenson et al., 2008; Crews et al., 2015; Kauffman, 2015; Martin et al., 2020; Prior et al., 2016). Crews et al. (2015) and Martin et al. (2020) specifically focused on students' perception of their readiness for online learning. The most cited student characteristics are self-efficacy (Prior et al., 2016), self-motivation (Glazier, 2016), and self-regulation (Bell and Akroyd, 2006; Blocher et al., 2002; Diaz, 2002; Diaz and Cartnal, 1999; Glazier, 2016; Ruey, 2010). From an extensive review of the literature, Kauffman (2015) developed a profile of the successful online student to include characteristics like self-awareness of needs, adequate management of feelings, self-regulation, self-discipline, self-evaluation, and internal locus of control. Glazier (2016) reported studies showing students who are self-motivated, self-regulated, and independent learners do better in online classes (Bell and Akroyd, 2006; Blocher et al., 2002; Diaz, 2002; Diaz and Cartnal, 1999).

Most relevant for PCC's QEP are student competencies and behaviors attributed to readiness for online learning. Among the most cited competencies is time-management (Glazier, 2016; Martin et al., 2020; Schrum and Hong, 2002; Smith, 2001; Zimmerman & Kulikowich, 2016). Likewise, study and goal-setting skills are important factors for student success in internet courses (Glazier, 2016; Martin et al., 2020; Schrum and Hong, 2002). Crews et al. (2015) identified seven strategies students should adhere to that align with the principles for good practice in undergraduate education proposed by Chickering and Gamson (1991) and Roper (2007). The strategies students should focus on when taking an online course include:

1. Develop a time-management strategy
2. Engage heavily in online discussion

3. Apply knowledge to real world concepts for context
4. Ask questions
5. Stay motivated
6. Work to understand instructions
7. Make connection to fellow students

Crews et al. (2015) also mention that time management skills are thought to be among the most important of the seven. These strategies support our plan to improve student preparedness and enhance student engagement in learning.

Technical and communication competencies have also been linked with student performance in online courses (Martin et al., 2020). Student perception of the ease and use of online learning resources as well as their navigation of learning management software and use of online tools for communication are essential factors in student success online (Ho et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2020; Wentling, 2007).

Communication competencies like communication interactions, willingness to communicate with others, use of discussion boards, and accessing resources help fulfil student learning needs (Kaymak & Horzum, 2013; Martin et al., 2020).

According to Shelton, Hung, and Lowenthal (2017), there is little research on specific strategies to improve online retention at the course or institution level (Tung, 2012). To improve student retention, some research has looked at using student-orientation programs (Hill, 2006; Lynch, 2001), student support services (Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlop, 2003; Simonson et al., 2015; Travers, 2016; Yoder, 2005), peer mentoring (Boyle, Kwon, Ross, & Simpson, 2010), and peer tutoring (Hill, 2006). Other research has focused on interventions at the course level. The future of online learning depends on the continued success of students, which in turn depends on students progressing through their online courses and ultimately graduating from their online programs.

According to Park, Martin, and Lambert (2019), online videos are very often utilized in hybrid (and online) learning courses to present major course topics or concepts to students. Researchers have found that students' perceptions on the value of the online video components may affect their motivation to

continue in their study and progress in the course (Merhi, 2015). In addition, students' perceived usefulness of said online videos is linked to the students' academic performance (Wei, Peng, & Chou, 2015). When students decide to be more actively engaged in the course and use online videos to learn and review course material, their decisions can then affect their academic performance (Bolt & Koh, 2006) and satisfaction (Shih, 2006). Several studies have reported increased learning outcomes when courses integrated different types of interaction combined with online videos. When comparing the learning outcomes among students who used interactive videos, non-interactive videos, and no videos, Zhang, Zhou, Briggs, and Nunamaker (2006) discovered that students who used the interactive feature made significant gain, whereas students with non-interactive videos and who had no videos did not. Wei, Peng, & Chou (2015) also agreed that the interactive mode was most effective.

Wandler and Imbriale (2017) explain that online modules, sections, or content folders specifically dedicated to self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS) may prove beneficial to students who have never received guidance on these strategies or to those students who have been away from the classroom for an extended period of time (like adult or veteran students). It is recommended that online instructors consider developing their own online readings, videos, or links to material discussing the importance of self-regulation and how to be successful in an online class (Hu & Driscoll, 2013). Module topics to consider including would be those on goal setting, time management, test preparation, or note taking strategies for the online environment (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2005). Hu and Driscoll (2013) showed that web-based tutorials designed to promote successful SRLS improved academic performance and course satisfaction amongst community college students enrolled in a web-based college success course. Wandler and Imbriale (2017) state: "Empowering students with the tools needed to be successful and active learners, rather than passive sponges, will lead to a more fulfilling and productive educational experience for all" (13). It is recommended that faculty work closely with their campus instructional designer or center for teaching and learning as these individuals can help faculty build better online courses over time through several iterations.

A review of the current literature shows that there has been much growth in online course offerings in recent years, yet there has not been comparable growth in pedagogical training for faculty members that are teaching online courses. Faculty need the proper training to be able to effectively teach online courses. Current research also stresses the importance of faculty establishing rapport with their online students, as well as the importance of constant instructor communication. Current research also shows that preparing students for online courses through the use of interactive training is key for improving student success rates in online courses.

*Appendix F. Moodle Home Page Training for Student Preparation*

<b>Moodle Home Page Training</b>
<b>Locating Grades</b>
<b>Accessing Your Classes</b>
<b>Quick Check</b>
<b>Course Table of Contents</b>
<b>Course Dashboard</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The Gradebook</b></li> <li><b>Class Participants</b></li> <li><b>Your Overall Progress</b></li> <li><b>Your Overall Course Grade</b></li> </ul>
<b>My Courses Return to Moodle Home Page</b>
<b>Instructor Name and Email Link</b>
<b>Links for Students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Moodle Introduction for Students</b></li> <li><b>Help Using Moodle</b></li> <li><b>PCC Helpdesk</b></li> <li><b>Library</b></li> <li><b>Tutoring Center</b></li> <li><b>Staff Directory</b></li> <li><b>Academic Calendar</b></li> <li><b>Student Services</b></li> <li><b>Student Activities</b></li> <li><b>Career Services</b></li> </ul>
<b>Quick Check</b>
<b>Log Out</b>
<b>Need Help with Moodle?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tutorial and Academic Success Center (TASC)</b></li> <li><b>Website</b></li> </ul>

<b>Email</b>
<b>Phone</b>
<b>Need Help with a Specific Subject?</b>
<b>Tutorial and Academic Success Center (TASC)</b>
<b>Website</b>
<b>Email</b>
<b>Phone</b>
<b>Strategies for Online Success!</b>
<b>Netiquette</b>
<b>Strategy 1: Am I Being Appropriate Online?</b>
<b>Quick Check</b>
<b>Strategy 2: Use Your Syllabus</b>
<b>Strategy 3: Time Management</b>
<b>Quick Check</b>
<b>Strategy 4: Use Your Resources</b>
<b>Tutorial and Academic Success Center (TASC)</b>

**Appendix G. QEP Research**

<b>Fall 2022 QEP Courses Totals</b>				
<b>Course</b>	<b>Total Sections</b>	<b>Total Unique Faculty</b>	<b>Total FT Faculty</b>	<b>Total Students</b>
BUS-110	3	3	3	118
CIS-110	7	7	7	161
COM-120	4	4	3	134
COM-231	5	5	3	172
ENG-111	11	11	4	451
HEA-110	3	3	3	142
HUM-115	5	5	4	175
MAT-143	2	2	2	45
PHI-240	3	3	1	95
PSY-150	6	6	4	322
PSY-241	1	1	0	123
SOC-210	3	3	2	131
Grand Total	53	53	36	2069

<b>High Enrolled IN Courses</b>					
<b>Course</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
BUS-110	376	471	475	502	472
CIS-110	756	667	674	777	745
COM-120	421	498	408	531	710
COM-231	342	430	486	560	1071
ENG-111	487	598	646	751	1758
HEA-110	332	414	548	612	857
HUM-115	547	609	701	658	766
MAT-143	168	196	182	222	299
PHI-240	316	517	451	594	586
PSY-150	709	752	713	846	1216
PSY-241	260	276	293	389	458
SOC-210	358	379	398	584	794

*\*Majority of Summer 2021 excluded*

Course	2016-17 TR	2016-17 IN	Diff.	2017-18 TR	2017-18 IN	Diff.	2018-19 TR	2018-19 IN	Diff.	2019-20 TR	2019-20 IN	Diff.	2020-21 TR	2020-21 IN**	Diff.	Avg. Difference
BUS-110	70.59%	60.11%	10.48%	73.89%	67.30%	6.59%	72.93%	68.63%	4.30%	66.83%	65.14%	1.69%	--	49.15%	--	5.77%
CIS-110	59.21%	50.79%	8.42%	78.12%	65.52%	12.60%	75.21%	58.31%	16.90%	48.46%	50.19%	-1.73%	--	55.84%	--	9.05%
COM-120	78.33%	63.66%	14.68%	81.08%	67.47%	13.61%	79.59%	71.32%	8.27%	74.65%	69.30%	5.34%	--	69.01%	--	10.47%
COM-231	77.32%	56.14%	21.18%	84.63%	60.93%	23.70%	87.93%	61.73%	26.20%	84.63%	65.54%	19.09%	--	67.32%	--	22.54%
ENG-111	67.10%	53.59%	13.50%	68.75%	55.18%	13.57%	74.17%	57.59%	16.59%	74.29%	63.65%	10.65%	--	57.11%	--	13.58%
ENG-112	74.46%	62.37%	12.09%	69.09%	66.05%	3.04%	67.76%	67.64%	0.12%	69.33%	69.01%	0.31%	--	66.05%	--	3.89%
HEA-110	64.00%	65.06%	-1.06%	75.98%	70.53%	5.45%	69.05%	68.43%	0.62%	68.22%	63.56%	4.66%	--	60.91%	--	2.42%
HUM-115	80.87%	68.01%	12.87%	77.24%	66.67%	10.57%	72.37%	67.48%	4.89%	66.10%	65.65%	0.45%	--	69.71%	--	7.19%
MAT-143	64.25%	61.90%	2.34%	72.28%	67.35%	4.93%	--	70.88%	--	77.05%	63.06%	13.99%	--	58.86%	--	21.26%
MUS-110	78.34%	63.48%	14.87%	70.27%	66.85%	3.42%	76.10%	64.56%	11.54%	84.12%	65.85%	18.27%	--	74.93%	--	12.02%
PHI-240	84.27%	69.94%	14.33%	85.16%	66.92%	18.24%	75.00%	72.51%	2.49%	--	67.85%	--	--	74.57%	--	11.69%
PSY-150	68.22%	50.35%	17.86%	67.13%	62.90%	4.24%	73.89%	71.67%	2.22%	72.97%	69.98%	2.99%	--	75.08%	--	6.83%
PSY-241	83.41%	63.08%	20.33%	88.29%	68.84%	19.45%	79.22%	69.28%	9.94%	82.07%	77.89%	4.18%	--	77.29%	--	13.48%
ACA-111	69.34%	68.73%	0.61%	69.73%	72.49%	-2.77%	71.07%	73.37%	-2.30%	69.62%	74.09%	-4.47%	--	64.86%	--	-2.23%
ART-111	58.00%	66.45%	-8.45%	62.35%	73.59%	-11.24%	61.70%	63.10%	-1.39%	61.90%	64.81%	-2.91%	--	63.63%	--	-6.00%
HSC-110	65.22%	77.35%	-12.13%	73.33%	83.77%	-10.43%	74.36%	79.06%	-4.70%	80.26%	85.35%	-5.09%	--	78.73%	--	-8.09%
MAT-171	56.28%	74.40%	-18.12%	52.75%	77.62%	-24.87%	--	73.86%	--	--	80.36%	--	--	69.95%	--	-21.49%
ECO-251	75.59%	67.20%	8.39%	73.37%	69.91%	3.47%	74.34%	72.70%	1.64%	63.69%	78.10%	-14.41%	--	63.11%	--	-0.91%
SOC-210	60.05%	62.01%	-1.96%	61.19%	77.84%	-16.65%	74.03%	70.10%	3.93%	83.57%	79.45%	4.12%	--	74.69%	--	-2.64%